

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.), OTRA, XA

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: VICTORIA FALLS

FOR SCHAUFLE AND WOODS

, THERE FOLLOWS BRIEFING MEMORANDUM ON VICTORIA FALLS
IN CONNECTION WITH SECRETARY'S PLANNED VISIT TO FALLS.
MEMORANDUM ON VISIT TO MASAI-MARA GAME PARK VISIT
SCHEDULED FOR MAY 3-4 WILL BE CABLED TO PARTY ON APRIL 26.

2. DESCRIPTION OFFALLS AND VICINITY - VICTORIA FALLS HAS
LONG BEEN CONSIDERED ONE OF THE NATURAL WONDERS OF THE
WORLD. THERE ARE A FEW HIGHER WATERFALLS ELSEWHERE BUT
NONE EQUALS THE MAJESTY OF THE ZAMBEZI RIVER AS IT CASCADES
OVER A MILE-WIDE LEDGE, TWO THIRDS OF WHICH LIES IN
RHODESIA, DOWN INTO A CHASM 323 FEET BELOW. AT THE HEIGHT
OF THE FLOODS (MARCH - MAY), MORE THAN TWO MILLION GALLONS
OF WATER SURGE OVER THE BRINK EVERY SECOND. THE IMPACT
OF SO MUCH FALLING WATER RAISES CLOUDS OF VAPOR WHICH CAN
BE SEEN 20 MILES AWAY. FOR THIS REASON, THE FALLS ARE
KNOWN AS "MUSI-OA-TUNYA", -- "THE SMOKE THAT THUNDERS".
THE FIRST EUROPEAN TO SEE THE FALLS WAS DAVID LIVINGSTONE

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(IN 1855), WHO WROTE: "SCENES SO LOVELY MUST HAVE BEEN

GAZED UPON BY ANGELS IN THEIR FLIGHT".

AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, WHEN THE RIVER IS IN FULL FLOOD, WALKING NEAR THE FALLS ALONG A FOOTPATH THROUGH THE RAIN FOREST IS LIKE STEPPING INTO A SHOWER: ONE IS THOROUGHLY DRENCHED, EVEN WITH A RAINCOAT AND UMBRELLA. ONE CAN HOWEVER STAND NEXT TO THE FALLS AND FROM A SHELTER LOOK ACROSS THEM TOWARD RHODESIA.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS OF THE AREA ARE THE SMALL LIVINGSTONE MUSEUM, A MINI-GAME PARK, MAKISHI DANCERS WITH COSTUMES OF WOVEN REEDS, AND HANDICRAFTS (CARVED WOODEN ANIMALS AND MASKS).

3. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE - THE FALLS ARE AT A POINT WHERE INDEPENDENT BLACK AFRICA MEETS MINORITY RULED-AFRICA (RHODESIA AND BY EXTENSION, SOUTH AFRICA AND SOUTH WEST AFRICA).

THE VICTORIA FALLS BRIDGE WAS THE SITE OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN IAN SMITH AND THE ANC IN LATE 1975 AND EARLY 1976, UNTIL THE FINAL BREAKDOWN IN MARCH 1976. SINCE THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND KAUNDA WERE ALSO DIRECTLY INVOLVED BACKING THEIR RESPECTIVE CLIENTS, THE SITE ASSUMES A BROADER IMPORTANCE OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDEPENDENT BLACK AFRICA AND MINORITY-RULED AFRICA. FUNDAMENTALLY, VICTORIA FALLS BRIDGE SIGNIFIED THE CLASH BETWEEN TWO POWERFUL BUT ANTITHETICAL LIFE-STYLES: ONE-- THE RHODESIAN -- BASED ON WHITE SUPREMACY AND AN UPPER MIDDLE CLASS LIFE STYLE FOR WHITES; THE OTHER -- THE ZAMBIAN -- AIMED AT THE CREATION OF A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY UNMARRED BY GREAT EXTREMES OF WEALTH AND POVERTY AND ALSO DEDICATED TO SOCIAL EQUALITY.

HISTORICALLY THE TIES BETWEEN ZAMBIA AND RHODESIA HAVE BEEN CLOSE, AND THE BORDER CLOSING HAS CAUSED ECONOMIC HARDSHIP TO BOTH COUNTRIES. IT WAS RHODESIA EARLY IN 1973 THAT DECIDED TO CLOSE THE BORDER IN RETALIATION FOR GUERRILLA RAIDS FROM ZAMBIA. ALTHOUGH RHODESIA OPENED ITS SIDE ONE WEEK AFTER CLOSURE, THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ZAMBIANS DECIDED TO KEEP THEIR SIDE CLOSED. THE ZAMBIAN DECISION TO CLOSE THE BORDER AND REROUTE TRADE CORRIDORS THROUGH ANGOLA AND (WITH CHINESE HELP) VIA THE TAN-ZAM RAILWAY TO DAR-ES-SALAAM HAS BEEN ECONOMICALLY COSTLY TO ZAMBIA. MOVING COPPER SOUTH THROUGH RHODESIA TO SOUTH AFRICAN AND RHODESIAN PORTS IS THE CHEAPEST WAY TO EXPORT IT. THE DECISION TO REROUTE THROUGH ANGOLA MADE ZAMBIA VULNERABLE TO A CLOSURE OF THE BENGUELA

RAILWAY, WHICH OCCURRED IN AUGUST 1975, AND INDIRECTLY

LED TO GREATER CONGESTION AT DAR, WHERE MUCH ZAMBIAN
COPPER HAS PILED UP. SISCO

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